

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 1939

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, NU
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION PLOTTING

SUMMARY: AMB HAS BEEN CONTACTED BY INDIVIDUALS SAYING THEY REPRESENT THINKING OF BOTH LIBERAL PARTY (PLN) AND CONSERVATIVE PARTY (PCN) HEIRARCHIES SEEKING U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN A SOLUTION TO NICARAGUA'S PROBLEMS. AMB HAS REFUSED TO BECOME INVOLVED EXCEPT TO KEEP THE DOOR OPEN TO THEM. EMB BELIEVES THIS PLOTTING HAS NO GREAT SIGNIFICANCE, BUT THESE CONTACTS INDICATE CURRENT MENTALITY OF TRADITIONAL POLITICIANS AND PROBLEM FOR EMB IN MAINTAINING NEUTRALITY STANCE. END SUMMARY

1. AMB HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH TWO INDIVIDUALS (ONE EACH FROM PLN AND PCN NATIONAL BOARDS) WHO BELIEVE THAT NICARAGUA IS IN FOR INCREAS-

ING VIOLENCE WHICH COULD LEAD TO ANACHY AND A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER. THEY BOTH SAY THERE IS AGREEMENT WITHIN THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE TWO PARTIES TO WORK OUT A POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION WHICH WILL RESTORE PEACE. THEY HAVE FOLLOWED UP AN EARLIER DISCUSSION WITH THE AMB TO ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN HIS PRESENCE INM FUTURE MEETINGS OF OTHER (UNSPECIFIED) LEADERS OF THE TWO PARTIES IN ORDER TO PROMOTE THEIR PLAN. AMB REITERATED HIS INSTRUCTIONS THAT U.S. WILL NOT BE INVOLVED IN PLOTTING BUT THAT U.S. REMAINS INTERESTED IN LEARNING NICARAGUANS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE SITUATION AND WHAT LEADERS
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ARE THINKING AND PLANNING AS A RESPONSE TO THE INCREASED DISTURBANCES. THE INDIVIDUALS ARE CLEARLY NOT HAPPY WITH THIS RESPONSE BUT STATE THEY UNDERSTAND THE U.S. POLICY.

2. THE PLN APPARENTLY WANTS A DEAL WITH THE PCN WHEREBY, IN EXCHANGE FOR CERTAIN (UNSPECIFIED) GURANTEES, THE PCN WILL SUPPORT SOMOZA'S CONTINUING RULE UNTIL 1981. THE PCN, ON THE OTHER HAND,

APPARENTLY WANTS A DEAL WITH THE PLN PROVIDING FOR SOMOZA'S SURRENDER OF POWER EITHER (1) IMMEDIATELY; (2) TEMPORARILY, I.E., MEDICAL TRAVEL TO THE U.S. FOR 3 TO 6 MONTHS; AFTER WHICH HE COULD RETURN AND PRESIDE OVER A RESTRUCTURED GOVERNMENT WITHOUT HIS HAVING ANY REAL POWER; OR (3) AS A MINIMUM, SOME IRON-CLAD GUARANTEE OF SOME IMMEDIATE REDUCTION IN SOMOZA'S POWER AND EXIT FROM ALL EFFECTIVE POWER IN 1981. THE AMB HAS BEEN ASSURED BY THE TWO INFORMANTS THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE TWO PARTIES ARE SURE THEY CAN WORK OUT A COMMON POSITION. HOWEVER, THE REMAINING PROBLEM IS A GUARANTEE FOR THE DEAL. THE APPARENTLY THINK (BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE) THAT THE U.S. CAN PLAY SUCH A ROLE. THEY WANT THE U.S. TO MEDIATE BETWEEN THE PCN AND PLN AND BETWEEN BOTH OF THEM AND SOMOZA (AND, IF NECESSARY, INTERVENE WITH THE GN TO OBTAIN ITS ACQUIESCENCE.)

3. EMB BELIEVES THE TWO INDIVIDUALS REPRESENT THE THINKING OF A FEW OTHER PARTY LEADERS BUT NOT AN AGREED PARTY POSITION. IN ANY CASE, THEIR APPROACH TO AMB DEMONSTRATES THE TRADITIONAL PROBLEM IN NICARAGUAN POLITICS THAT THE PLN CANNOT ACT INDEPENDENTLY FROM SOMOZA, AND THAT IT LOOKS TO THE U.S. TO COMMUNICATE THEIR CONCERNS TO THE PRESIDENT. SIMILARLY, THE PCN REMAINS UNWILLING TO CONSIDER ENTERING INTO ANY DEALS WITH THE PLN AND SOMOZA WITHOUT THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE U.S. AS A GUARANTOR.

4. AT THE SAME TIME, FROM OTHER CONTACTS, IT APPEARS CLEAR THAT EVEN THOUGH THERE IS PREOCCUPATION AMONG TRADITIONAL POLITICIANS THAT THE SITUATION IS GETTING (OR HAS GOTTEN) OUT OF CONTROL, THERE
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REMAINS THE BELIEF THAT WHEN THE CRUNCH COMES THE U.S. WILL NOT REMAIN UNINVOLVED. THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL OPPOSITION, MUCH MORE THAN THAN THE GON, APPEARS TO BELIEVE THAT U.S. INTERVENTION WILL PROMOTE THEIR INTERESTS. HOWEVER, SOMOZA BELIEVES THE U.S. SHOULD PLAN A ROLE WHICH WILL SHORE UP HIS POSITION BY DISCOURAGING WHAT HE SEES AS THE IRRESPONSIBILITY OF THE OPPOSITION.

5. THE EMB HAS CONSISTENTLY TRIED IN ALL ITS CONTACTS TO DISABUSE NICARAGUANS FROM THEIR BELIEF THAT THE U.S. WILL INTERVENE. THE NICARAGUANS REMAIN INCREDULOUS. THE EMB CANNOT EVALUATE TO WHAT EXTENT THIS ATTITUDE REFLECTS ESCAPISM FROM THE NEED TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROMOTING SOME FORM OF DIALOG WHICH WOULD MEET WITH WIDESPREAD PUBLIC OPPROBRIUM FROM A LARGE SECTOR OF THE BODY POLITIC. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, FROM THREE RECENT CASES THAT TAKING MODERATING POSITIONS IS POLITICALLY DANGEROUS. THE ARCHBISHOP WAS DENOUNCED BY LEFTIST STUDENTS WHEN HE TRIED TO OBTAIN CONCESSIONS FROM SOMOZA TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF THE STUDENTS (REFTEL). LUIS PASOS ARGUELLO, A TESTY, SEMI-RETIRED, GRAND OLD MAN OF THE CONSERVATIVES PUBLICLY SPOKE OUT ARGUING THE INEVITABILITY OF A DIALOG WITH SOMOZA. AS A RESULT, WITHIN THE OPPOSITION, HE NOW IS CONSIDERED SENILE. A PCN DEPUTY, ALBERTO SABORIO, MADE A SIMILAR ARGUMENT WHICH APPEARED IN LA PRENSA. HE HAS BEEN WIDELY

CRITICIZED, EVEN WITHIN HISDBWN PARTY, FOR THAT STATEMENT. IT WILL
TAKE COURAGE FOR ANYONE ELSE IN THE OPPOSITION TO TAKE AN INITIATIVE
TOWARDS A DIALOG.

6. WHILE THE VIRTUAL POLITICAL DEADLOCK CONTINUES MORE AND MORE PEOPLE

ARE BECOMING INVOLVED IN PROTEST AND INSURRECTIONARY ACTIVITIES.
IT IS INCREASING QUESTIONABLE WHETHER THESE PEOPLE WOULD RESPECT

A VOLITICAL SOLUTION IF ONE COULD BE NEGOTIATED BY THE TRADITIONAL
POLITICIANS.

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